

Veterans and Family Support

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Department of California
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Veterans are our # 1 priority!

Goals:

- VFW National Veterans Service
- VFW Veterans & Military Support Programs
- Assist Veterans, Service Members and Their Families
- Promote Veteran & Military Suicide Prevention
- Mental Health Awareness



September is National Suicide Prevention

month. Suicide impacts family and friends. The new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day for those in crisis and their loved ones. We should always be alert for common warning signs but remember the list below is not all inclusive. Introverts are already quiet and can be difficult to read.

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time.
- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out.
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings

- Feeling like there is no reason to live.
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, school, or other things they used to care about
- Expressing feelings of excessive guilt or shame, failure, lack of purpose in life, or being trapped



**New Crisis Number: 988, then press 1
or Text 838255**



The ***Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness Blue Tear drop Sticker*** is the VFW Auxiliary's symbol to give this issue the attention it so desperately needs. Wear the teardrop to open a conversation; when asked what the teardrop is, share that it's to create awareness for veteran and military suicide. See attachments below to print out copies of the blue teardrop sticker.

Veterans, service members and their families often face unexpected challenges, and VFW Auxiliary is here to assist them in their time of need. Since its founding in 1914, the VFW Auxiliary has worked tirelessly to offer financial and moral support to those who need it most.

The Veterans & Family Support Program:

- Offers support for veterans, service members and their families.

Our ***Veterans & Family Support Resource Card*** includes a list of 20 organizations and agencies that offer support to veterans, service members and their families.

Use card stock to print out the Resource Card attached below.

Networking is an awesome tool for out of the box thinking. Auxiliary members should make phone calls each day to check up on Veterans and their families. Suggested activities can include sending cards, stopping in to say hello, sitting on the porch, and taking walks.



September Is National Service Dog Month!

National Service Dog Month is a month-long celebration honoring the hard work and life-changing impact service dogs make on people with disabilities every day.

National Service Dog Month was created to celebrate the dogs who have a career helping humans. Service Dogs receive hundreds of hours of specialized training on specific, skilled tasks. This is one of the ways they are set apart from "Therapy Dogs" and Emotional Support Animals. They also have protected public access rights.

Please support Service Dog organizations that are geared to assist our Veterans!

September 16th is POW/MIA Recognition Day. Take a moment of silence to remember those Veterans who have not come home and their families waiting for them. Carry them in your heart to remember the sacrifice each has given.

September 18th is Air Force Day. The Air Force turns 75 this year. Take an Air Force Veteran out to dinner/supper, go fishing, or sit and watch the sunset over the horizon.

Maui Assistance- Maui VFW Fund Our hearts go out to the many families and businesses who have been impacted by the Maui wildfires, thank you to those Auxiliaries who have offered financial support to help those in need during these challenging times. Together let's stand strong and extend a helping hand to our fellow VFW Community in Maui on their path to recovery, rebuilding and resilience. Visit the VFW web page for ways you can help.

Stand Down participation is part of the VFS Program- be sure to report your activity and participation in your reports.

National Awards for Auxiliaries # 1.

Most outstanding activities and/or events to increase awareness of military suicide and mental health.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event to increase awareness of military suicide and mental health. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Please see the national Program Book for details. Award form is attached below.